Tie-up Indian banks with Israeli firm

700. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an Israeli firm with pioneering expertise in drip irrigation has tied up with some Indian banks to facilitate loans for drip irrigation projects in the country; and

(b) if so, what is Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) and (b) M/s. Netafim Irrigation India Private Ltd., a subsidiary of Netafim A.C.S. has reportedly tied up with ICICI Bank for lending money to the farmers for acquiring drip irrigation systems.

Investment of commercial bank in Government securities

701. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of commercial bank investments in approved Government securities as a proportion of their total assets at the end of September, 2003; and

(b) in what manner this proportion compares with the statutory minimum liquidity ratio?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) and (b) Scheduled Commercial Banks (excluding RRBs) have maintained 42.0 per cent investment in Government and other approved securities of their net demand and time liabilities (NDTL) as on September 19, 2003, which was 17.0 per cent higher than the statutory minimum of 25 per cent of statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) required to be maintained.

Trend in lending to agriculture and small scale industry

702. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the emerging trend in commercial bank lending to agriculture and small scale industry;